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No. 34.

The Head of Romulus

A COMEDIETTA IN ONE ACT

FOUNDED ON THE FRENCH OF EUGENE SCRIBE

BY

SYDNEY GRUNDY

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THE HEAD OF ROMULUS

A Comedietta in One Act

FOUNDED ON THE FRENCH OF EUGENE SCRIBE

BY

SYDNEY GRUNDY

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THE HEAD OF ROMULUS.

First produced at the St. James' Theatre, London,
under the management of Mr. George Alexander, on
May 10, 1900.

CHARACTERS.

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| JOSHUA TURNBULL, Esq. | <i>Mr. H. H. Vincent.</i> |
| SIR BARNES BARNSTAPLE, Bart. . | <i>Mr. W. H. Vernon.</i> |
| HAROLD BARNSTAPLE | <i>Mr. R. Cunningham.</i> |
| MRS. TURNBULL | <i>Miss Susie Vaughan.</i> |
| DOLLY TURNBULL | <i>Miss Lily Grundy.</i> |
| JANE. | <i>Miss Betterley.</i> |

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G92h

THE HEAD OF ROMULUS.

SCENE.—*Drawing-room at Mr. TURNBULL'S. French window opening upon garden, C. Doors R. and L., at back, opposite one another. Fireplace R., as low down stage as possible. Semi-grand piano and seat, L. C. Couch, R. C., with head towards piano. A portfolio on a stand, up stage in L. corner. An escritoire and seat, L. front, with a waste-paper basket next to audience. An easy chair in front of the piano. R. of window, a cabinet.*

MRS. TURNBULL and JANE are discovered. MRS. TURNBULL is dressed up to the eyes.

MRS. T. (*at piano*) And the piano-tuner? (*running her hand over the keys*)

JANE. (R. C.) Everybody's been, and the young man from Butterby's is laying out the lunch.

MRS. T. (*coming L. C.*) The fact is, Jane, that we expect a visitor—two visitors. Now, I do hope, Jane, that there will not be any confusion over the announcement. It is very simple. Sir Barnes and Mr. Harold Barnstaple.

JANE. Sir Barnes and Mr. Harold Barnstaple.

MRS. T. If you occasionally repeat that to yourself, all will be well. Where is Miss Dorothy? Isn't she dressed yet?

JANE. Dressed, ma'am! (*moves towards window*) She's taken the dog out for a run.

MRS. T. Dear me, dear me! was ever such a girl? And our guests may come at any moment.

JANE. (*sotto voce—dropping down R. C.*) Sir Barnes and Mr. Harold Barnstaple.

MRS. T. If they should arrive before her, see that she puts on her new gown before entering the room. I want

Engl. G. E. Tait, 27 Nov 26. rec'd from French

her to appear to the best advantage, and you know how careless Miss Dorothy is of her appearance.

JANE. (*sotto voce*) Sir Barnes and Mr. Harold Barnstaple.

MRS. T. You can go now, and listen for the bell. Nothing is more vulgar than a delay in opening the door.

JANE. (*backing to door R. Going—sotto voce*) Sir Barnstaple and Mr. Harold Barnes.

Enter TURNBULL, R., reading a slip of paper.

TURN. (*runs into JANE, who exits R. Stands looking after her*) Confound that girl—just as I was getting it into my head.

MRS. T. Joshua, on so momentous an occasion, I trust you will allow nothing to get into your head.

TURN. (*coming R. C.*) But, my dear, you know I never could speak extempore. The right word never comes to me, and the wrong one is always waiting just round the corner.

MRS. T. But are you contemplating making a speech?

TURN. No, not a speech—just a few cordial words. On so momentous an occasion, a few words will naturally be expected.

MRS. T. Pray, let me see them.

TURN. Certainly. (*gives her the slip. She sits front of piano*) You shall hear them. (*poses himself on hearthrug and clears his throat*) Let me see, how does it begin?

MRS. T. "Sir Barnes——"

TURN. Of course! What did you tell me for? that's just the bit I know. "Sir Barnes and Mr. Barnstaple, it is with a feeling of pride, which I will not endeavor to disguise, that I receive you on my humble hearth. Words fail me——" Well, what is it?

MRS. T. "Words fail me——"

TURN. I said that. (*up stage*) It's the next bit I want.

MRS. T. "To express the pleasure it affords me to proffer the right hand of friendship——"

TURN. (*down stage*) Stop, stop, stop! Mrs. Turnbull, are you making this speech, or am I?

MRS. T. Try again. (*pause. He goes to fireplace, dashes his foot against the fender, then turns and very quickly*)

TURN. "It is with a feeling of pride——"

Re-enter JANE, R., and comes C.

JANE. Please, ma'am, am I to put out the best—

TURN. (*seizing cushion from couch*) Take a month's notice! (*flings it at her. Exit JANE, flying R., evading it*) That's that girl all over! Always where she's not wanted—never where she is.

MRS. T. (*puts down slip—going to pick up cushion*) Nonsense! she's an excellent servant. Why go and upset her, just when she has need of all her equanimity? (*replaces cushion*)

TURN. And how about *my* equanimity? How about my speech?

MRS. T. Calm yourself, Joshua. (*going L. C. to pick up the slip*)

TURN. "Am I to put out—" Pshaw! she's put *me* out—that's what she's put out!

MRS. T. Come, come, control yourself. (*sits front of piano*) "Sir Barnes—"

TURN. "And Mr. Barnstaple, it is with a feeling of pride—" (*DOROTHY runs in through window. She is in simple morning dress, with a straw hat worn anyhow. Her hair is disarranged, her cheeks are flushed, and she is rather out of breath. MRS. T. rises*)

DOLLY. Oh, I've had such a run! I've been racing with Pickle, and I've beaten him! (*tosses her hat up and catches it C.*)

MRS. T. Hush, my dear, hush!

DOLLY. Good gracious! what's the matter with papa?

TURN. It's not a bit of use! There's a conspiracy to interrupt me!—a conspiracy! (*turns to fire*)

DOLLY. I'm very sorry. What have I interrupted?

MRS. T. Your father is preparing an oration.

TURN. (*turning to MRS. T.*) Not an oration, a few cordial words.

DOLLY. What about?

MRS. T. That is a secret. You must not ask questions.

DOLLY. (*towards MRS. T.*) But why are you dressed up in your best frock? Is that another secret?

MRS. T. It's the same secret.

DOLLY. (*towards TURN.*) And why has a cart come from Butterby's? You are expecting somebody! There! I've guessed the secret. (*towards MRS. T.*)

TURN. My dear Dolly, it's impossible to keep anything from *you*. We *are* expecting somebody.

DOLLY. Mayn't I know whom?

MRS. T. Sir Barnes Barnstaple; Baronet. (*proudly*)

TURN. Now the cat's out!

DOLLY. Who's he?

MRS. T. A great friend of your father's.

TURN. Well, not a great friend, Harriet. He's an acquaintance I made in the city.

MRS. T. At any rate, you've known him many years.

TURN. And a pretty expensive acquaintance it's been.

MRS. T. Sir Barnes has certainly been most unfortunate!

TURN. It's I who've been unfortunate. Sir Barnes has made a very good thing out of it.

MRS. T. In any case it's no use crying over spilt milk. And perhaps, all the time, you have only been providing for Dolly.

DOLLY. What have *I* to do with Sir Barnes Barnstaple?

TURN. What d'you say, Harriet? Shall we tell her, eh?

MRS. T. There is no object in concealment. (*takes stage, L.*)

TURN. We've let *one* cat out—why not let the other?

DOLLY. There is *another* cat?

MRS. T. (*turns to DOROTHY*) Mr. Harold Barnstaple.

TURN. (*takes one step nearer DOROTHY*) His son and heir!

MRS. T. (*same bus.*) The future baronet!

DOLLY. Well, what has that to do with me?

MRS. T. A bachelor.

TURN. (*same bus.*) Only just home from Oxford.

DOLLY. Well?

MRS. T. Can't you put two and two together?

TURN. One and one's quite enough.

MRS. T. One and one's two.

TURN. And two's a pair. Ha, ha! (*rubs his hands*)

DOLLY. Whatever do you mean?

TURN. That you might make a match of it. Ha, ha!

DOLLY. Some one I've never seen!

TURN. But you're going to see him to-day.

DOLLY. Who has never seen *me*!

TURN. That's why he's coming, to have a look at you.

DOLLY. (*to MRS. T.*) Is that why you have bought that horrid dress?

MRS. T. My dear, you look a dream!

DOLLY. (*towards TURN.*) Now, papa, *does* it suit me?

TURN. Well, that's a matter of taste.

DOLLY. (*goes up*) Oh, what a dreadful arrangement! (*to R. at back*) To be inspected—to be trotted out, like a horse at an auction! I, who am always so awkward in company!

MRS. T. What nonsense, Dolly! At your age I should have jumped at such a match.

TURN. (*goes to MRS. T.*) But as it was, you jumped at *me*—a few years later.

MRS. T. Joshua! I *never* jumped at you.

TURN. You're jumping at me *now*!

DOLLY. (*coming down R.*) But I won't marry him! (*sits on couch*) I won't! I won't! (*collapses on couch*)

TURN. You've done it!

MRS. T. Nay, Joshua, it was *you*!

TURN. Haven't I kept it secret? Have I said a word? And haven't you worried at me—worried—worried! Did I have a wink of sleep last night?

MRS. T. You slept like a top! (*turns up L. of piano*)

TURN. (*goes to DOROTHY*) Dolly, my dear, there's no harm done. Give him a chance. If you don't want to, you sha'n't marry him.

DOLLY. (*lifting her head*) That is a promise?

TURN. Yes, of course it is. I only want you to *know* one another. I thought I had arranged it all so nicely, but of course your mother must put *her* finger in the pie.

DOLLY. (*drying her eyes*) Never mind, I don't care if I needn't marry him.

TURN. That's better!—that's much better! (*artfully*) And if I should propose a little music?

DOLLY. (*rises*) Oh, papa, spare him that!

TURN. But the piano has been tuned on purpose.

MRS. T. (*back of piano*) And I have carelessly placed Beethoven's Sonata in E flat minor—what's this?—"The Belle of New York"?

DOLLY. (*crossing TURNBULL to MRS. TURNBULL*) Yes, I was playing it this morning.

MRS. T. (*hiding it under other music*) My dear, my dear, you might have ruined everything. First im-

pressions are so very important. And now I look at you—child, you are not fit to be seen. Pray run upstairs and change your dress at once.

DOLLY. (*turning R., and going reluctantly*) Oh, dear!

TURN. And above all, remember your deportment. (TURNBULL *seizes poker*)

DOLLY. (*stops, turning L.*) Deportment? Please not that!

MRS. T. Head up. (*business. Lifts her chin*)

TURN. Back in. (*business with poker, which he replaces*)

MRS. T. Eyes down.

DOLLY. Will that do?

TURNBULL, DOROTHY, MRS. TURNBULL.

MRS. T. Yes, I think, Joshua——

TURN. Yes, Harriet; I think, that—with the Sonata in E flat——

MRS. T. (*going to portfolio*) And the Head of Romulus—— (DOROTHY *laughs*) Why do you laugh?

DOLLY. I don't think I'd show that if I were you.

TURN. Not show the Head of Romulus, which gained you the first prize?

MRS. T. (*coming down with it L. of piano*) A noble drawing.

TURN. But what's that on the back? (DOROTHY *covers her face*)

DOLLY. A *pas seul* by Miss Letty Lind.

MRS. T. Dolly, what desecration! (*replaces it in portfolio*)

TURN. After the money that has been lavished on your education! (*a loud peal of the bell. ALL start*) Surely that can't be they?

MRS. T. Lunch isn't nearly ready.

DOLLY. But who else *can* it be? (ALL *stand breathless*)

MRS. T. (*at door, L.*) They're opening the front door. (*a sound of voices off*)

TURN. I do believe that is Sir Barnes's voice. (*going up to R. at back*)

MRS. T. Impossible!

TURN. Hush! Listen! (*pause*)

Re-enter JANE, L.

JANE. Sir Barnstaple and Mr. Harold Barnes. *(exit JANE, L. ALL make a mad rush off, TURNBULL going out R., DOLLY through window, MRS. TURNBULL, R.)*

Enter SIR BARNES BARNSTAPLE and HAROLD, L.

SIR B. *(seeing nobody, faces round to HAROLD)* Nobody here ! *(R. C.)*

HAROLD. I told you we were half an hour too soon. *(L. C.)*

SIR B. What does it matter ? We were to drop in without any ceremony. We *have* dropped in, and there is no ceremony. *(strolls towards door R.)*

HAROLD. There's a strong smell of cooking.

SIR B. *(sniffing)* Grouse, or I'm a Dutchman.

HAROLD. But grouse are not in season.

SIR B. And Turnbull said pot-luck. You don't know Turnbull ; he's a rough diamond.

HAROLD. *(sits in front of piano)* I wonder you don't turn him into a company.

SIR B. *(coming R. of HAROLD)* My dear Harold, he's too valuable to put on the market. He's been a gold mine to me—quite set me on my legs—and it only remains for you to make a suitable alliance, to restore the Barnstaples to something like their old position in the county. *(goes R.)*

HAROLD. *(thoughtful)* The suitable alliance being, of course, Miss Turnbull.

SIR B. *(sits on couch)* Turnbull's only child ; and of course she will inherit the fortune he has made as head of the prosperous firm of Turnbull Brothers, oil and tallow merchants, Lower Thames Street.

HAROLD. *(lifting his head)* Look here, Dad ; I don't like this business at all. I'm not particularly keen on getting married, but if ever I do marry, I shall not marry oil—I shall not marry tallow—I shall marry a jolly nice girl. *(nursing his leg)*

SIR B. Miss Turnbull is considered a most charming young lady.

HAROLD. It is not my intention to marry any young lady because other people consider her charming. I shall take the liberty of waiting till I meet somebody I consider charming myself.

SIR B. Silence ! *(rises)* Some one is coming !

Re-enter MRS. TURNBULL, R., *smiling sweetly.*
HAROLD *rises.*

MRS. T. (C.) My dear Sir Barnes! a thousand pardons, but you find us all in confusion. However, you must take us as we are, you know—plain, homely people. Joshua said no ceremony, so I thought you would excuse my morning wrapper.

SIR B. Certainly, Mrs. Turnbull, certainly. Beauty, when unadorned, is then adorned the most.

HAROLD. (*taking stage, L. Aside*) Oh, what a mother-in-law!

SIR B. Allow me to present my son to you. (HAROLD *turns and bows*)

MRS. T. (*curtseys*) And so this is your son! (*tours round HAROLD to L.*) The image of you, dear Sir Barnes, the image! I should have known him anywhere!

HAROLD. (*aside to SIR B.*) Let's hope her daughter isn't the image of *her*!

SIR B. (*pushing him off and crossing him to C.*) I am told there is a striking resemblance. He is a good boy, too. Always respectful and obedient. (*aside to HAROLD*) Well, sir, have you nothing to say for yourself?

HAROLD. I am afraid we are a little early, Mrs. Turnbull.

HAROLD, SIR BARNSTAPLE, MRS. TURNBULL.

MRS. T. Sir Barnes is welcome at any time. You know we have not made a stranger of you. Just our midday meal—quite plain and simple.

HAROLD. (*aside*) Everything out of season.

SIR B. My tastes are simplicity itself.

Re-enter TURNBULL, R.

MRS. T. Ah, here is Joshua!

HAROLD, SIR BARNSTAPLE, TURNBULL. (*end of piano*) MRS. TURNBULL.

TURN. (*clears his throat*) Sir Barnes and Mr. Barnstaple—it is with a feeling of disguise which I will not endeavor to pride that I receive you on my humble hearth. Words fail me—I repeat, words fail me; but what I mean is—(*advancing to SIR BARNES and nearly wringing his hand off*) I'm damned glad to see you.

SIR B. My son.

TURN. (*crossing* SIR B., *who joins* MRS. T.) I hope you're well, sir. (*same bus.*)

HAROLD, TURNBULL, SIR BARNSTAPLE, MRS. TURNBULL.

HAROLD. I hope you are the same.

TURN. And how's Oxford?

HAROLD. Oxford is much as usual.

TURN. Don't know the place myself. You'll be surprised to hear I had no university training.

HAROLD. Really! You astonish me.

SIR B. But I don't see Miss Turnbull.

MRS. T. I can't think what Dolly is doing: I have always impressed upon my daughter the importance of punctuality. She has been most carefully educated, and I think when you see her, Mr. Barnstaple, you will consider that she does credit to her training.

HAROLD. Doubtless. (*aside*) With two such parents, what must she be like?

MRS. T. Ah, here she is! (*crosses* SIR B., *to meet* DOLLY)

Re-enter DOLLY, *stiff, awkward and uncomfortable, overdressed in the worst of taste, all corset and coiffure.*

HAROLD. Great Scott! (*stands overwhelmed*)

TURNBULL, DOLLY, MRS. TURNBULL.

HAROLD.

SIR BARNSTAPLE.

MRS. T. (*goes up to* DOLLY, *aside*) Head up.

TURN. (*aside to* DOLLY) Back in.

MRS. T. (*aside to* DOLLY) Eyes down.

TURN. (*proudly*) My daughter, Mr. Barnstaple. (*DOLLY bows awkwardly, HAROLD crosses* TURN., *who surveys them from hearth. MRS. T. turns to piano*)

HAROLD. Delighted to make your acquaintance. I trust you are quite well.

TURNBULL, HAROLD, DOLLY, MRS. TURNBULL, SIR BARNSTAPLE.

DOLLY. Quite, thank you.

MRS. T. (*at piano*) Do you like music, Mr. Harold?

HAROLD. Well, it depends upon the music.

MRS. T. Beethoven, for instance?

DOLLY. Oh, mamma! I'm sure Mr. Barnstaple hates Beethoven.

HAROLD. Not at all.

DOLLY. Ah, you haven't heard *me* play him.

MRS. T. (*advancing*) My dear, you know he is your favorite composer. As for your execution, let Mr. Harold judge for himself.

HAROLD. Oh, if it is distasteful to Miss Turnbull—

MRS. T. Perhaps after lunch?

HAROLD. (*aside*) Respited! (*turns up*)

MRS. T. Meanwhile, show Mr. Harold your portfolio. (DOLLY goes R. of portfolio and brings it down, stand as well, helped by HAROLD, L. of it to C.; MRS. T. crosses to L. of TURN.; *aside to him*) I thought it time to drop the Barnstaple.

HAROLD. (*to SIR B.*) If I hate anything, it's being called "Mr. Harold."

MRS. TURNBULL.
TURNBULL.

DOLLY, HAROLD.,
SIR BARNSTAPLE.

DOLLY. Head of Romulus. (*Pause—eyeglasses—she gives it to HAROLD, who gives it to SIR B.*)

SIR B. A speaking likeness! (*gives it back to HAROLD, who puts it on piano*)

DOLLY. Grapes and a pineapple.

SIR B. One could almost eat them!

DOLLY. A dog asleep.

SIR B. Wonderful the expression on the face of that dog.

HAROLD. Are these your doing, Miss Turnbull?

SIR B. (*crosses to R. of TURNBULL*) Now that the ice is broken, leave them to themselves. We can have our little chat in the garden.

TURN. A capital idea! Harriet, we are going for a stroll. Won't you come with us? (*winking and going to window*)

SIR B. Take my arm, Mrs. Turnbull.

MRS. T. You honor me, Sir Barnes. (*exit TURNBULL, C. Stops at the window and looks back*) Were they not made for one another?

SIR B. Made for one another, made for one another! (*exeunt C.*)

DOLLY. That's all. (*shuts the portfolio and assumes the deportment attitude*)

HAROLD. (*aside*) Thank goodness ! (*takes stage L.*) A boarding-school paragon—a bread and butter miss, of the breadiest and most buttery description. (*turns and regards DOLLY, turns again*) I wonder how long she means to stand like that.

DOLLY. (*standing by portfolio, aside*) I shall scream directly !

HAROLD. (*aside*) I really can't bear it any longer—Won't you be seated, Miss Turnbull ? (*she leaves portfolio and drops suddenly on the couch. He strolls round piano to window. At window*) Hang it, she sits more awkwardly than she stands. I suppose I must say something. What a nice piece of ground you have here—quite an acre.

DOLLY. One acre, two roods and twelve perches.

HAROLD. (*turning on his heel. Aside*) Perches ! She thinks she's saying her weights and measures ! (*to and fro at back*)

DOLLY. (*aside*) I wish he wouldn't prowl up and down like an animal at Barnum's.

HAROLD. (*coming down C.*) Your parents seem to have deserted us ; but I am indebted to them for affording me the opportunity for this delightful conversation. (*bows. She rises and curtsies awkwardly—he paces the stage again L. front*)

DOLLY. (*aside*) Now, he's rude.

HAROLD. (*aside*) What am I to say next ?

DOLLY. (*aside*) Well, I can be rude too. I feel just in the humor ! (*plumps on to couch again*)

HAROLD. Do you like drawing ?

DOLLY. No.

HAROLD. I thought not.

DOLLY. Why did you think not ?

HAROLD. By the Head of Romulus.

DOLLY. What was the matter with his head ?

HAROLD. If I may say so, it struck me as being a trifle swollen.

DOLLY. Why shouldn't it be ? He had just founded Rome.

HAROLD. (*aside, taking stage L.*) The repartee of a school-girl is peculiarly irritating.

DOLLY. Won't you be seated, Mr. Barnstaple ?

HAROLD. Thank you. (*sits front of piano—aside*) She has a temper. (*DOLLY beats the floor with her foot*)

HAROLD. And when do you return to school, may I ask?

DOLLY. School? *(rises)*

HAROLD. *(rises)* School.

DOLLY. I've left school. *(taking stage R.—aside)*
Impudence!

HAROLD. *(taking stage L. Aside)* Temper, indeed! So, you have completed your education, and are naturally contemplating marriage? *(L. front)*

DOLLY. *(R. front)* I am contemplating nothing of the sort.

HAROLD. But, Miss Turnbull, you are surely acquainted with the object of my visit here to-day?

DOLLY. It will be fruitless.

HAROLD. *(advancing L. C.)* We are agreed?

DOLLY. *(advancing R. C.)* You are of my opinion!

HAROLD. You don't like me?

DOLLY. And you think I'm horrid?

HAROLD. To be perfectly candid, much as I admire your appearance, your manners and accomplishments, I cannot believe that we are calculated to make one another happy.

DOLLY. Oh, thank you, Mr. Barnstaple; I am beginning quite to like you; but you are the last man in the world that I should dream of marrying.

HAROLD. My dear Miss Turnbull, how can I thank *you* for rescuing me from a horrible dilemma? Since we are both agreed, we may at once bring this absurd interview to a termination.

DOLLY. It *was* ridiculous, wasn't it?

HAROLD. Wasn't it preposterous? *(both laugh)* But I really think parents are the most ridiculous people in the world.

DOLLY. Oh, aren't they? To dress me up in this fright of a frock.

HAROLD. That isn't your own taste then?

DOLLY. To make me hold my back in, and cast down my eyes——

HAROLD. Then you don't always?

DOLLY. And to exhibit that stupid head of Romulus, that was done by the drawing-master——

HAROLD. You didn't draw the Head of Romulus?

DOLLY. Of course not!

HAROLD. I congratulate you.

DOLLY. Won't they be angry, when they hear what we've decided?

HAROLD. But we will brave their indignation, shoulder to shoulder, hand in hand.

DOLLY. I think not, hand in hand.

HAROLD. Well, perhaps not, hand in hand. (*lets her hand go*)

DOLLY. And meanwhile, I will run and change my dress.

HAROLD. You won't be long, will you?

DOLLY. (*at door R.*) You won't go till I'm back?

HAROLD. Good-bye for the present. (*going up to door R.*)

DOLLY. Good-bye. (*exit R. HAROLD crosses thoughtfully to L. front, sound of voices off C.*)

Re-enter MRS. TURNBULL C., followed by SIR BARNES and TURNBULL. MRS. TURNBULL comes down R., front, SIR BARNSTAPLE R. C. and TURNBULL L. C., HAROLD turns)

HAROLD. Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull!

TURN. Mr. Barnstaple?

HAROLD. Miss Turnbull and I have come to an understanding.

MRS. T. Harold! (*about to embrace him, crosses to R. of HAROLD*)

HAROLD. One moment, Mrs. Turnbull. The conclusion we have arrived at is, that we are utterly unsuited to one another.

SIR BARNSTAPLE, TURNBULL, MRS. TURNBULL, HAROLD.

TURN. Unsuitd!

SIR B. Nonsense, sir; rank nonsense! You don't know what you are talking about.

HAROLD. We are both agreed, that it is best to be perfectly frank. Miss Turnbull is, no doubt, a very charming young lady.

SIR B. Gad, I should think so!

HAROLD. But I am the last person in the world whom she would care to marry; and to be candid, she is not at all the sort of girl whom I would care to make my wife.

SIR B. You call that candor; I call it impertinence.

TURN. Not at all, Sir Barnes. What's the use of

beating about the bush? If your son doesn't like my daughter, there's an end of it.

MRS. T. I'm sure we have no wish to force his inclinations; and if our daughter isn't good enough——

HAROLD. Pardon me, Mrs. Turnbull, I have nothing but admiration for your daughter, who has most generously helped me out of a very awkward dilemma, and I shall always be glad to know her as a friend.

TURN. And us, I hope, as well?

HAROLD. (*crossing* MRS. T.) Certainly, Mr. Turnbull. (*shaking hands*)

SIR BARNSTAPLE, TURNBULL, HAROLD, MRS. TURNBULL.

TURN. If we're not father and son, we needn't be enemies.

MRS. T. Why shouldn't we be friends?

HAROLD. We will be, Mrs. Turnbull, we will be. I can't sufficiently thank you for your kindness.

MRS. T. And you will stay to lunch?

HAROLD. I shall be very pleased; in fact, I want to.

TURN. And you, Sir Barnes, of course?

SIR B. But how can I apologize——

TURN. Tut, tut, tut. That's all over.

MRS. T. Let's have no apologies, no forms, no ceremonies. Make yourself quite at home.

HAROLD. I detest forms and ceremonies.

TURN. Then since you don't mind, I'll put on my house-coat. (*goes to door L.*)

MRS. T. And I will make a change in my attire. (*HAROLD goes up to open door R., exit R.*)

TURN. Sir Barnes, a gin and bitters before lunch? (*at door L.*)

SIR B. That's not a bad idea. (*going up to door L.*)

TURN. Mr. Barnstaple? (*at door R.*)

HAROLD. No, thank you, Mr. Turnbull.

TURN. (*to SIR BARNES.*) Come along, Sir Barnes. (*exit L.*)

SIR B. (*at door L.*) You puppy! you've missed ninety thousand pounds.

HAROLD. (*at door, R.*) Of tallow?

SIR B. Idiot! (*exit, L.*)

HAROLD. (*comes down C.*) I don't like tallow, and Turnbull reeks of it. Not very firm about his H's either. But otherwise not a bad sort. And the old lady

—really, when one thinks of it, they've behaved very well. It's not their fault, they're tallow. And the girl— (*sits on couch*)—Upon my word, if she had never been to boarding-school, she wouldn't be so bad. As a wife, of course, impossible; but as an acquaintance—really, I shouldn't mind having another look at her. (*DOLLY is heard singing, off*) Who's that, I wonder? Rather a nice voice. There's not much of it, but—who can it be? A sister, perhaps. No, she's an only child. (*re-enter DOLLY in her first dress, perfectly natural and at her ease, R. She comes C.*) By Jove, it *is* a sister! (*rises and bows*)

DOLLY. Have I been very long?

HAROLD. Why, it's you!

DOLLY. Of course it's I. Who did you think it was?

HAROLD. Really, I didn't recognize you.

DOLLY. Why not?

HAROLD. You look quite nice.

DOLLY. I've been told that before.

HAROLD. You don't mean to tell me you're the same girl I was talking to just now?

DOLLY. No, I'm a different girl; I'm myself, now.

HAROLD. Well, but—

DOLLY. You seem to doubt it. Can't you smell the tallow?

HAROLD. To do me justice, I never said a word about tallow.

DOLLY. No; you didn't *say* it.

HAROLD. But I looked it?

DOLLY. Yes. (*nods*)

HAROLD. What a snob you must have thought me!

DOLLY. Must I? (*turns off L.*) Well, I did.

HAROLD. Is that why you didn't like me?

DOLLY. (*turns again*) That was one reason.

HAROLD. And the others? Of course, I know, I'm not good looking.

DOLLY. Oh, you'd pass.

HAROLD. Do you think so?

DOLLY. Really, I scarcely looked at you.

HAROLD. Won't you look at me now?

DOLLY. I'm looking.

HAROLD. How blue your eyes are!

DOLLY. Well, they're not green, are they?

HAROLD. Miss Turnbull, if I had eyes like yours, I shouldn't waste them on the carpet.

DOLLY. Mr. Barnstaple, if you imagine that any young gentleman can teach any young lady what to do with her eyes, you are a very unobservant person.

HAROLD. Don't you always look at the carpet?

DOLLY. (*with a glance*) No. (*turns off*)

HAROLD. (*aside*) I begin to think I've made rather a fool of myself—Miss Turnbull?

DOLLY. (*L. front*) Mr. Barnstaple?

HAROLD. Although we are both agreed that anything in the nature of an engagement between us is out of the question, I hope there is no reason why we shouldn't be friends?

DOLLY. None in the world.

HAROLD. I'm afraid I did not appear to advantage at our first interview.

DOLLY. Well, scarcely.

HAROLD. But however distasteful I may be to you as a lover, I assure you I am A 1 as a friend.

DOLLY. I've often thought how nice it would be to have a friend like you.

HAROLD. Have you, Miss Turnbull? (*crosses to her*)

DOLLY. I'm afraid you'll think I'm very forward.

HAROLD. Not at all. I like it.

DOLLY. It doesn't matter now it's "off," you know. Oh, I'm so glad it's "off," aren't you?

HAROLD. Well——

DOLLY. We can talk naturally, now. And when they're natural, all good girls are forward.

HAROLD. (*taking stage, R. Aside*) I am beginning quite to like this girl.

DOLLY. (*advancing*) Isn't it rather chilly without a fire?

HAROLD. No, I don't find it so. I feel much warmer than I did just now.

DOLLY. Do you smoke?

HAROLD. Like a chimney.

DOLLY. Well, why don't you?

HAROLD. Shouldn't you mind?

DOLLY. Tobacco? I love it.

HAROLD. But in the drawing-room?

DOLLY. Oh, I often have—— (*HAROLD starts*) I mean, that doesn't matter.

HAROLD. Well, If I may? (*produces cigarette-case*) But I'm afraid I have no matches. (*DOLLY crosses him,*

goes to mantelpiece) Thanks, awfully. *(she strikes a match and lights his cigarette)* It's awfully kind of you. *(offers case—she shakes her head)* I thought you often had——?

DOLLY. When no one's looking.

HAROLD. Well, no one's looking now.

DOLLY. Yes, *you* are.

HAROLD. But *I* don't count—now it's "off."

DOLLY. I forgot it was "off."

HAROLD. Let me prevail upon you! *(offers case again)*

DOLLY. Well, just three whiffs.

HAROLD. To keep me company.

DOLLY. *(taking cigarette)* Egyptian. *(he nods. She lights it with his)* Thanks. *(motions him to seat in front of piano, and perches on end of couch. HAROLD sits front of piano)*

HAROLD. This is awfully jolly.

DOLLY. Isn't it? *(crossing her legs)* I wish I was a man!

HAROLD. I'm very glad you're not.

DOLLY. Then you could take me out.

HAROLD. Well, I can now.

DOLLY. Oh no, it wouldn't be proper.

HAROLD. No, I suppose not. Propriety's an awful nuisance, isn't it?

DOLLY. Sometimes.

HAROLD. Of course, I could have taken you out to a certain extent, if we had been engaged.

DOLLY. Yes, but we're not engaged.

HAROLD. And we're not going to be.

DOLLY. So you *can't* take me out.

HAROLD. I was only reflecting, that after all, even an engagement has its advantages.

DOLLY. Really, Mr. Barnstaple, if you talk in that way——*(rises, throws cigarette into fire and assumes the attitude of the previous scene)*

HAROLD. *(rises)* Don't—don't, Miss Turnbull! I won't talk in that way! It's off—right off! *(going to her. She laughs and sits again on couch)* What an awfully pretty ring! *(sits L. of her)*

DOLLY. Yes, it is rather nice. *(holds her hand out)*

HAROLD. *(takes her hand and examines ring)* Now, I wonder——?

DOLLY. What do you wonder——?

HAROLD. I wonder who gave you that ring.

DOLLY. A man.

HAROLD. (*with jealousy*) A man! (*drops her hand*)

DOLLY. What's the matter? Did you never hear of a man before?

HAROLD. Is that why you dislike me?—Miss Turnbull, is it possible that you are in love with some other fellow?

DOLLY. Why not?

HAROLD. He isn't half such a good chap as I am! He isn't half so fond of you as I am! He won't make you half as good a husband as I should! (*rises*) That's the worst of you girls; you're in such a deuce of a hurry; you fall in love with the first man who comes along; and when—and when—and when—I come along—I'm too late. (*goes L. C.*)

DOLLY. You are mistaken, Mr. Barnstaple. (*rising and going R. C.*) He is quite as good a "chap" as you are. He is a great deal more fond of me than you are; but he won't make me a husband of any sort, because he happens to be my father.

HAROLD. You're not engaged, then?

DOLLY. And not going to be. (*goes up*)

HAROLD. You are not leaving me?

DOLLY. (C.) I think it's time I rejoined mamma.

HAROLD. Don't have another attack of boarding-school! Oh, Miss Turnbull, why did they send you to school? Whenever we're beginning to get on, the Head of Romulus pops up, and settles everything. (*seeing it on piano snatches it up*) Confound the Head of Romulus! Hallo! what's this? "*Pas seul* by Miss Letty Lind." That's better! that's much better! Now, whoever did this, knows how to draw. The same man didn't do this who did the Head of Romulus. This is alive! The Head of Romulus is as dead as the Dodo.

DOLLY. I did that.

HAROLD. *You* did!

DOLLY. All out of my own head.

HAROLD. Miss Turnbull, you're an artist! (*puts drawing on piano*) Do you play as well as you draw?

DOLLY. Not Beethoven.

HAROLD. No, I bar Beethoven, except on state occasions. This is more my style. (*sits and plays. She comes L. of piano*)

DOLLY. Yes, I'm afraid that's my style, too. (*sings*) "When we are married——"

HAROLD. "Why, what will you do?"

DOLLY. "I'll be as sweet as I can to you; I will be tender and I will be true, when I am married, sweetheart, to you."

HAROLD. (*springing up and seizing her hand across piano*) Will you, Miss Turnbull, will you? If you will——

DOLLY. (*withdrawing her hand and backing from piano, L.*) I'm sure, it's time that I rejoined mamma.

HAROLD. Romulus again? (*going to R.*)

DOLLY. (R. C.) We have been talking quite long enough—for to-day.

HAROLD. Then I may come again?

DOLLY. I'm sure papa and mamma will be very glad to see you at any time.

HAROLD. And you?

DOLLY. Well——(*laughs*) Of course I should.

HAROLD. I'll come. (*slight pause—DOLLY playing with a flower, HAROLD looking at her*)

DOLLY. (*sauntering about*) When will you come?

HAROLD. Next week.

DOLLY. Sunday's a nice long day.

HAROLD. But it's a long way off.

DOLLY. Saturday, then?

HAROLD. Well, Saturday's a *broken* sort of day. How about Friday?

DOLLY. Fridays are so unlucky.

HAROLD. But Thursday is to-morrow.

DOLLY. Well, why not come to-morrow? Have you an engagement?

HAROLD. No, I have no engagement.

DOLLY. Come, then.

HAROLD. (*advancing R. C.*) I *will* come.

DOLLY. (L. C.) What time?

HAROLD. Oh, early!

DOLLY. *Quite* early?

HAROLD. By the midday train.

DOLLY. That's such a slow one.

HAROLD. Say, by the eleven.

DOLLY. That doesn't stop here.

HAROLD. Well, I'll catch the ten. (*hands out*)

DOLLY. (*she takes them*) And I'll be at the station, with the ponies. (*about to go*)

HAROLD. Don't go. (*detaining her and twisting her to R.*)

DOLLY. Haven't you quite finished?

HAROLD. Oh, Miss Turnbull, why weren't you like this just now?

DOLLY. Just now?

HAROLD. When you rejected me.

DOLLY. Did I? I thought it was *you*.

HAROLD. Why did you make such a guy of yourself? Forgive me—such a *guy*.

DOLLY. Because you came to look at me, and I object to be made an exhibition of!

HAROLD. I didn't come, I was brought. And a pretty fool I made of myself! I rudely rejected what I would now give the world to possess. (*turns off L.*)

DOLLY. Mr. Barnstaple—I suppose I ought to pretend that I don't understand you. But I'm not good at that sort of thing. I will be as frank with you as you have been with me. I like you—I like you very much—but there is something between us which puts us forever apart.

HAROLD. What, in the world?

DOLLY. Papa!

HAROLD. But he is quite agreeable. It is his wish.

DOLLY. I will be quite frank still. He sometimes drops his H's. Well, I could teach him his H's—but I should despise myself forever, if I presumed to correct him. (*takes stage R.*)

HAROLD. Well, let him drop his H's! I don't care! H's are cheap enough!

DOLLY. (*turns*) Do you mean that?

HAROLD. From my heart.

DOLLY. You won't be ashamed of him? You will treat him as your equal—as he *is*?

HAROLD. Always.

DOLLY. And you can love me?

HAROLD. I *do* love you, Dolly.

DOLLY. (*her head against his shoulder*) Oh, I'm so happy!

HAROLD. (*holding her*) Are you?

DOLLY. I thought I was *always* happy. Now I know I wasn't.

HAROLD. Why?

DOLLY. I always wanted something. Now I know what I wanted.

HAROLD. And what did you want?

DOLLY. (*looking him straight in the face*). You!

Re-enter SIR BARNES and TURNBULL in a comfortable coat L., and MRS. TURNBULL, quite at her ease, R.

MR. and MRS. TURNBULL turn their backs. SIR BARNES blows his nose and drops down L. of piano.

DOLLY, HAROLD, MRS. TURNBULL, TURNBULL, SIR BARNES.

HAROLD. Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull—your daughter and I agreed this morning that we were utterly unsuited to each other; but since then, we have discovered that we are not so unsuited as we thought—and—well, it comes to this—— (*takes DOLLY'S hand*)

SIR B. Yes, yes; we see what it comes to. You have learnt sense at last. A girl of ninety thousand—ninety thousand!

MRS. T. What did I tell you, Joshua?

TURN. You told me nothing, Harriet. It was I who told Sir Barnes over a gin and bitters. "Sir Barnes," I said, "just leave the young people alone, and Dolly's accomplishments will do the trick." You smiled, Sir Barnes——

SIR B. No, I choked. The bitters went the wrong way.

TURN. But I was right after all.

HAROLD. No, you were wrong, Mr. Turnbull. A sensible man does not love a woman for her accomplishments, but for herself; and a sensible woman will be herself, in spite of her accomplishments. (*turning to DOLLY*)

SIR B. Don't argue with your father-in-law, puppy.

TURN. Let him alone, Sir Barnes, he'll learn wisdom presently. You can't put old heads on young shoulders.

DOLLY. (*going to him*) No, papa—(*picking up drawing from piano*) But you can put the Head of Romulus into the waste-paper basket. (*crosses to L. front and pops it into waste-paper basket. Re-enter JANE R.*)

JANE. Lunch is quite ready, ma'am. (*exit R.*)

TURN. Sir Barnes, the old lady—— (SIR B. crosses
TURN. to MRS. T. and takes her off R. on his arm) Mr.
Barnstaple, my daughter. (DOLLY runs to HAROLD.
*Exeunt HAROLD and DOLLY, L. TURNBULL carefully
replaces the Head of Romulus in the portfolio, where it
remains confronting the audience, and exit, R.)*

CURTAIN.

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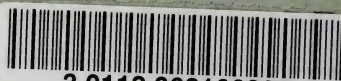
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